

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER
MANNED SPACECRAFT RECOVERY FORCE, ATLANTIC
TASK FORCE ONE FOUR ZERO
NAVAL AIR STATION
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23511

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From: Commander Manned Spacecraft Recovery Force, Atlantic
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750.12); forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A
(b) CTF-140 ltr ser 467 of 16 Sep 1969
(c) CTF-140 ltr ser 784 of 17 Dec 1969

Encl: (1) Chronology of Highlights, 1969
(2) Basic Narrative
(3) Documentary Annexes

1. Enclosures (1) through (3), forwarded in accordance with reference (a), summarize this command's operations during the period 1 January through 31 December 1969.

2. References (b) and (c) forwarded documentary material pertaining to Apollo 11 and 12 respectively.

W. S. Guest
W. S. GUEST

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CINCLANTFLT (Code N334) Less Enclosure (3)

CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS 1969

January - February	Training for Apollo 9
January	Testing of Mobile Quarantine Facility
3 March	Launch of Apollo 9
13 March	Splashdown of Apollo 9
March - April - May	Training of Apollo 10
18 May	Launch of Apollo 10
26 May	Splashdown of Apollo 10
June - July	Training of Apollo 11
16 July	Launch of Apollo 11
20 July	Splashdown of Apollo 11
2 October	CTF-140 receives NASA Group Achievement Award
16 October	CTF-140 receives NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center Certificate of Achievement
October - November	Training of Apollo 12
14 November	Launch of Apollo 12
24 November	Splashdown of Apollo 12

Enclosure (1)

BASIC NARRATIVE

COMMAND HISTORY FOR MANNED SPACECRAFT RECOVERY FORCE, ATLANTIC (TF-140) FOR 1969

In January, Task Force 140 began training for the Apollo 9 earth orbital mission. USS GUADALCANAL (LPH-7) was named as the primary recovery ship and received at-sea training in recovery operations. The amphibious transport USS CHILTON (LPA-38) and the amphibious cargo ship USS ALGOL (LKA-54), both on their initial recovery duty, also conducted at-sea training in preparation for the scheduled 28 February launch.

Also during the month of January the Mobile Quarantine Facility (MQF) was tested onboard the GUADALCANAL and the destroyer USS Myles C. FOX (DD-829). Other units assigned to the Apollo 9 mission included Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron THREE, Underwater Demolition Team TWENTY-TWO, and the USS PAIUTE (ATF-159), the inport standby rescue salvage ship.

Apollo 9 was launched on 3 March and splashed down on 13 March in the Atlantic 400 miles north of Puerto Rico when bad weather necessitated a change in the Primary Recovery Area.

During the month of March, USS YORK COUNTY (LST-1175) was trained in the Virginia Capes operating area to prepare her for Apollo 10 recovery duty. Later, however, she was released from recovery duty. On 15-16 April, USS OZARK (MCS-2) was trained in the Charleston operating area as the first of her class named for Apollo recovery duty. OZARK was assigned as the secondary recovery ship with her station in the South Atlantic. Also during April, USS CHILTON (LPA-38) received underway training in the Virginia Capes operating area. CHILTON was assigned a recovery station off the Canary Islands and was released from recovery duty after Apollo 10 successfully achieved translunar injection.

During the second week of May, USS RICH (DD-820) was trained for recovery duty off the Virginia Coast. RICH was assigned Station 1, 400 miles downrange from Cape Kennedy. RICH was released from recovery duty after successful translunar injection. USS SALINAN (ATF-161), the inport standby salvage rescue ship, was the final member of the Apollo 10 recovery force in the Atlantic.

Apollo 10, launched 18 May, was recovered by the USS PRINCETON (LPH-5) in the Pacific on 26 May.

Enclosure (2)

During the period prior to the scheduled launch date of Apollo 11, the USNS VANGUARD trained in recovery operations off the coast of Port Canaveral, Florida. The USS OZARK trained off the coast of Charleston, S. C. and the third ship to be assigned to the Atlantic Recovery Force, USS NEW (DD-818) trained off the coast of Virginia. The fourth ship for recovery duty was the USS SALINAN, the inport standby ship.

Apollo 11, the first manned lunar landing, was launched on 16 July 1969 and was recovered in the Pacific on 24 July. During this mission, Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., became the first two men to set foot on the moon while astronaut Michael Collins orbited the moon in the Command Module. Units in the Atlantic Fleet supporting the mission were the destroyer USS NEW (DD-818); USS OZARK (MCS-2) and USS SALINAN (ATF-161). On the day of splashdown, Captain Leo W. EARLY relieved Captain Coleman W. SIMS as Chief of Staff.

Apollo 11 was recovered by the USS HORNET (CVS-12) in the Pacific on 24 July 1969.

On 2 October 1969, Commander Task Force 140 received NASA's Group Achievement Award. Then on 16 October, a Certificate of Appreciation was presented to the Commander by NASA's Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, Texas. These awards were for outstanding services as the recovery force for Apollo missions in the Atlantic.

During the period 20-22 October, USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) conducted training in spacecraft recovery off the coast of Virginia. On 31 October the USS HAWKINS (DD-873) also conducted at-sea recovery training off the coast of Virginia. During the Apollo 12 mission, AUSTIN was assigned as the deep space recovery ship in the South Atlantic and HAWKINS was assigned as the launch abort ship stationed approximately 500 nautical miles downrange from Cape Kennedy. USS ESCAPE (ARS-6) was assigned as in-port standby salvage ship at Mayport, Florida.

Apollo 12 was launched on 14 November and landed the All-Navy crew of Commanders Charles Conrad, Jr., and Alan L. Bean on the moon while Commander Richard F. Gordon, Jr., orbited the lunar surface in the Command Module. The astronauts and their spacecraft were recovered in the Pacific on 24 November by the USS HORNET (CVS-12).

The philatelic mail that was processed by Primary and Secondary Recovery Forces during 1969 reached a peak during Apollo 11 of 250,000 covers for TF-130 and almost 100,000 covers for TF-140.